

A big loss for conservation on Amelia Island Monday as the Nassau County Commission voted 4-1 to accept a lopsided lawsuit settlement offer from a developer opposed to the County's height restriction. The agreement opens the way for the possibility of constructing multiple, 85-foot condominium towers on the south end of the Island adjacent to Amelia Island State Park.

This despite a tremendous outpouring of public support against the deal.

The belief (hope) now is that behind closed doors the Commission has been negotiating the purchase of this extraordinary 50-acre parcel from the developer to preserve it as conservation/recreation land. If you believe the Commissioners have the aptitude to put together a \$50 million purchase of this land stitching together private dollars and county money with state and federal grants, you have more faith in them than I do.

Either way, the Commissioners have rendered their building height ordinance null and void and signaled to any other potential developer in the county that they can be bullied down from whatever restrictions on development may be in place. In addition to the Commissioners' cowardice, the unwillingness of the County's outside counsel hired to advise it on this matter and lay down in front of the development lawyers was shameful.

The President's actions make clear he thinks [climate change can be combatted by electric cars alone](#). Foolishness.

In a previous newsletter we detailed how this contemporary "silver bullet" perspective on climate change recalls conservation efforts in the 1990s which focused solely on recycling.

We can't recycle our way out of the climate and extinction crises, nor can we drive our way out of them in electric cars. Electric cars are an important piece of solving the climate puzzle, but only one of about 20 other equally important pieces the federal government is doing little to tackle.

LINK: <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/political-commentary/biden-auto-emission-rules-willow-alaska-climate-change-1234714710/>

Equally important as electrifying the automotive fleet when it comes to combating climate change and addressing sea level rise and the biodiversity collapse is vigorously incorporating "green" solutions to coastal resiliency. At one time, mainland America was buffered from the ocean and Gulf by massive coastal dunes, million-acre wetlands, old growth forests, mangroves and oyster reefs with individual oysters numbering in the billions.

That is "green" infrastructure and in addition to lessening the impact of storm damage in coastal areas, they clean the air and water, mitigate flooding and provide habitat for wildlife. Most of that protection has been obliterated by coastal development.

Not so long ago, [Apalachicola Bay produced more than 10% of all oysters consumed in the United States](#). They supported the local economy, a tremendous diversity of sea life, and protected the coastline from storms. A variety of factors including poor water management upstream from the Bay, the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill and overharvesting caused the state to close the fishery for five years.

[A new documentary](#) from a pair of Florida filmmakers investigates the collapse of oyster populations globally and in Florida. The two joined my "Welcome to Florida" podcast recently.

FILM: <https://www.oyster.film/>

PODCAST: <https://www.stitcher.com/show/welcome-to-florida/episode/episode-149-oysters-302462754>

Apalachicola Bay oyster restoration efforts: <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2021/11/16/final-plan-unveiled-for-restoring-floridas-apalachicola-bay-and-its-oysters>